

Summary Report of the Meeting of the Scientific Sub-Committee on Animal Health held on 17 December 1997 in Brussels

Adopted 3 March 1998

List of Participants

MEMBERS

Dr. R. Ahl, Chairman, Dr. D. Alexander, Prof. S. Alexandersen, Prof. Dr. A. Dijkhuizen, Dr. F. Garrido-Abellan, Dr. M. Gunn, Prof. Dr. V. Moennig, Prof. G. Panina, Prof. Dr. J. van Oirschot, Dr. E. Vanopdenbosch

COMMISSION

Mr. J. Moynagh, Secretary, Mrs. Valerie Brown, Secretariat, Prof. H. Bazin, DG XII, Research, Mr. R. Bates, DG XIV, Fisheries

APOLOGIES

Prof. J. Badiola Diez, Prof. A-L. Parodi

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted. No member reported any conflicts of interest relating to the items under discussion.

The meeting was conducted in English. Translation services were not requested.

2. Election of two vice-Chairmen of the Sub-Committee

Prof Dijkhuizen and Prof Van Oirschot were elected first and second vice chairpersons respectively, for a period of one year.

3. Establishment of Working groups on questions put to the Sub-Committee

Working groups were established to report on the following questions;

1. Emergency Vaccination for Foot and Mouth Disease

I. Establish criteria for the commencement of an emergency vaccination campaign

II. Establish guidelines for the emergency vaccination programme

III. Prepare guidelines for the movement of animals and animal products within an area which has been subject to emergency vaccination.

Prof Panina was appointed Chair of a Working Group to prepare a response to the above question.

2. Classical Swine Fever in Wild and Domestic Pig Populations

I. Establish criteria for the surveillance of CSF in domestic pigs and for movement control measures for domestic pigs kept in areas where infected wild pigs exist

II. Establish criteria for monitoring CSF in wild boar in an infected area and for reducing the population.

III. Establish criteria which link the evolution of the disease in wild boar in an area with surveillance and control measures in domestic pigs.

Prof Moennig was appointed Chair of this Working Group. It was noted that a meeting on this subject would be held in Perugia in April 1998 involving many of the researchers active in this field. It was suggested that the meeting of the working group could await the outcome of the Perugia meeting.

3. Developments in Research and Diagnostic Procedures for Swine Vesicular Disease

I. Evaluate recent research developments

II. Evaluate new diagnostic procedures

III. Discuss methods and requirements for surveillance of the disease

IV. Discuss the definition of SVD and confirmation of the disease

V. Comment on epidemiological data presented by Member States on reported outbreaks and applied surveillance.

Prof Van Oirschot was appointed Chair of Working Group

4. Review of Annexes B, C and D of Council Directive 64/432/EEC

Annexes B, C and D (Chapter II) of Council Directive 64/432/EEC contain the approved tests and testing methods for Tuberculosis, Brucellosis and Enzootic Bovine Leucosis respectively. The Committee is requested to give an opinion on the modifications necessary to adapt these annexes to scientific developments.

Dr Gunn was appointed Chair of the Working Group to examine this topic. It was recognised that it might be appropriate to split the working group and meetings on this question for each disease.

5. Importation of Animals from Bluetongue and Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease Endemic Areas

I. Establish a protocol for the importation of animals from Bluetongue and Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease endemic areas

II. Comment on geographical areas in Australia which can be considered as safe or low risk areas as regards the exportation of susceptible animals to the European Union.

Prof Alexandersen was appointed Chair of this Working Group. The Committee noted that in the case of this question it would be necessary to invite an expert from outside the Community to take part in the working group. An expert from Plum Island was suggested.

6. Possible Links Between Johnes Disease and Crohn's Disease

There have been speculation and claims recently that both these diseases are caused by the same organism, mycobacterium paratuberculosis. Please examine the evidence for and against a link and comment.

Prof. Badiola was appointed Chair of this Working Group. As decided by the Scientific Steering Committee in its meeting of 8/9 December 1997, the Scientific Committee on Veterinary Measures in Relation to Public Health will also supply an expert to the working group.

7. Criteria for Eradication Programmes for Scrapie

Establish criteria which should be met by scrapie eradication programmes in order to be eligible for Community funding.

Dr Vanopdenbosch was appointed Chair of this Working Group. He noted that it would be appropriate to wait until after the meetings of OIE scheduled for 22-24 January 1998 and WHO scheduled for 2-4 February 1998 on this subject.

8. Effect of Composting of Fish Waste on Disease Agents

Establish a report on the criteria to be applied to the treatment of fish waste.

Dr Gunn was appointed Chair of the Working Group.

9. Additional Guarantees for Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis

Establish a report on the criteria to be applied for the control programmes and additional guarantees for infectious pancreatic necrosis (IPN).

Prof Alexandersen was appointed Chair of the Working Group to report on this question

10. Additional Guarantees for Bacterial Kidney Disease

Establish a report on the criteria to be applied for the control programmes and additional guarantees for bacterial kidney disease (BKD).

Prof Parodi was appointed Chair of the Working Group to report on this question

12. Community Measures for the Control of Noda Virus Infections

Nodavirus infection has caused severe losses in sea bass in the Mediterranean. The Committee is requested to examine the issue and advise whether any Community action is needed and/or feasible for controlling the disease (e.g. the creation of pathogen-free hatcheries).

Prof Alexandersen was appointed Chair of a Working Group to examine this issue

15. Herpes Virus Infection of Crassostrea Gigas

The Committee is asked to give scientific advice on the possible impact of the disease for European oyster farmers and, where necessary, on diagnostic methods and on control methods.

Prof Van Oirschot was appointed Chair of a Working Group to examine this issue

17. The Spread of Aphanomyces Invadans in Fish in Asia and the Risk of its Introduction into the EU

The fungus Aphanomyces Invadans has caused large scale fish kills in Asia. The Committee is asked to assess and comment on its possible introduction into the EU.

Prof Parodi was appointed Chair of the Working Group to report on this question

18. Definition of Newcastle Disease

The OIE have proposed a new definition of Newcastle disease. The Committee is requested to examine the suitability of the new definition and to make any recommendations thought necessary for change in the definition used in EC legislation. The Committee is also asked to comment on the possibility of using more in vitro tests rather than the in vivo tests currently used.

Dr Alexander was appointed Chair of a Working Group to examine this issue.

In the above cases an initial list of experts was established with a view to determining their availability to participate in the appropriate working groups.

The establishment of working groups to examine the following questions was postponed to a future meeting;

11. Marine Reservoirs for Disease

13. Sampling Schemes for Small Populations of Fish

14. Sampling Programmes for Mollusc Diseases

16. List of Fish Species Exempt from Art 14 of 91/67.

4. Miscellaneous

Scientific Steering Committee

Dr Garrido Abellan gave an account of developments in the most recent meetings of the Scientific Steering Committee held on 21 November and 8-9 December 1997. He noted that that Committee had set up an ad-hoc group on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies and that Dr Vanopdenbosch had been appointed a member of the group. He noted that external experts were also being involved and suggested that any members interested in assisting let him know.

Rules of Procedure

Dr Garrido Abellan supplied Dr Ahl with some amendments to draft rules of procedure. Dr Garrido noted that though he was the Chairman for the Committee, he intended to act as a normal member in meetings of the Sub-Committee, chaired by Dr Ahl, and hoped that the rules of procedure would reflect this position. The Secretariat noted that harmonised rules of procedure were currently being drafted which would, as far as possible, be common to all the Scientific Committees. These would be ready for discussion in time for the next meeting of the Committee.

Sub Committee on Animal Welfare

For information purposes, the Secretariat gave an account of the meeting of the Sub Committee on Animal Welfare which took place the previous day.

The next meeting will tentatively take place in February or March 1998. The proposal was made to have a meeting of the SCAH one day before a meeting of the SCAHAW, however, this may be difficult to arrange because the protocol and other documents of the SCAH will also be presented to the members of the SCAW.

The meeting was closed at 16:30.